

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Brookner, George	
Application No.: 09/683,426	Group Art Unit: 3629
Filed: 12/27/2001	Examiner: Richard Sukyoon Woo
Title: Postage Stamps Authenticating the Sender of a Mail Piece and Methods for Use Therewith	Confirmation No: 8729
Attorney Docket No.: ASCO.P-070	

BRIEF FOR APPELLANT

This brief is filed in support of Applicants' Appeal from the final rejection mailed 7/14/2005. Consideration of the application and reversal of the rejections are respectfully urged.

(i) Real Party in Interest

The real party in interest is one or more of the following entities: assignee Ascom Hasler Mailing Systems, Inc., Hasler Mailing Systems Inc., Neopost Group, and Mailroom Technology Inc.

(ii) Related Appeals and Interferences

On September 25, 2003 a Notice of Appeal and Appeal Brief was filed for this case. The Examiner reopened the case and mailed an Office Action on January 12, 2004. An Answer to the Appeal Brief of September 25, 2003 was not filed and no decision was rendered by the Board.

(iii) Status of Claims

The application was originally filed with 36 claims, and 39 claims are now pending. Claims 33-36 were canceled on March 4, 2004. Claims 37-43 were new claims added on October 4, 2004. Claims 1-32 and 37-43 have all been rejected.

The rejection of claims 1-32 and 37-43 is appealed.

(iv) Status of Amendments

No amendment has been filed subsequent to final rejection.

(v) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

It is noted that the application was filed electronically and thus does not have unambiguous page and line numbers. For that reason, the numbered paragraphs of the electronically filed application are cited.

A summary of a first embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 1, follows.

In this embodiment, there is a would-be purchaser who purchases a postal indicium. The purchaser has an identity. Importantly, the purchaser is not the same thing as the sender, and these two terms have distinct meanings, as shown at paragraph 9.

Before the would-be purchaser is permitted to purchase the indicium, it is required that the would-be purchaser provide first information indicative of his or her identity. The receipt of the first information is shown in Fig. 2, box 20. The requirement is described at paragraph 10, again at paragraph 16, and again at paragraph 23.

Second information is derived, by electronic computation, functionally from the first information, and is printed upon the postal indicium. The derivation of second information from the first information is described at paragraph 23. Such a postal indicium is shown in Fig. 1, with second information 13. The printing of the second information upon the indicium is shown in Fig. 2, box 21 and is described at paragraph 10 and again at paragraph 23.

An addressed mail piece bearing the postal indicium is received into the mail, shown in Fig. 2, box 22 and as described at paragraph 23. The mail piece is delivered, shown in Fig. 2 box 23 and as described at paragraph 23.

A summary of a second embodiment of the invention, typified by claims 10 and 19, follows.

In this embodiment there is a purchaser who has purchased a postal indicium. The purchaser has an identity. Importantly the purchaser is not the same thing as the sender, and these two terms have distinct meanings, as shown at paragraph 9.

An addressed mail piece bearing the postal indicium is presented for receipt into the mail. Before the mail piece is received into the mail, a requirement is imposed that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser. This is described at paragraph 25.

The addressed mail piece bearing the postal indicium is received into the mail, shown in Fig. 2, box 22 and as described at paragraph 23. The mail piece is delivered, shown in Fig. 2, box 23 and as described at paragraph 23.

Dependent claim 19 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser is cryptographically signed, and that the precondition for receiving at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium into the

mail also requires successful checking of the cryptographic signature. These further characterizations are described in paragraph 23 and 25 of the specification.

A summary of a third embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 20 and 29, follows.

In this embodiment there is a purchaser who has purchased a postal indicium. The purchaser has an identity. Importantly, the purchaser is not the same thing as the sender, and these two terms have distinct meanings, as shown at paragraph 9.

The addressed mail piece bearing the postal indicium is received into the mail, shown in Fig. 2, box 22 and as described at paragraph 23.

Before the mail piece is delivered, a requirement is imposed that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser. This is described at paragraph 23.

Dependent claim 29 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser is cryptographically signed, and that the precondition for delivering at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium also requires successful checking of the cryptographic signature. These further characterizations are described in paragraph 23 and 25 of the specification.

A summary of a fourth embodiment of the invention, typified by claims 30-32, as follows.

In this embodiment there is a would-be mail recipient possessing a list of expected senders, described at paragraph 26 and at claim 30 as filed.

The recipient receives a delivered mail piece bearing a postal indicium, the postal indicium bearing second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the sender of the mail piece. Such an indicium is shown at Fig. 1. The recipient reads the second information indicative of the identity of the sender. This is discussed at paragraph 26.

The recipient determines whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information on the list of expected senders. This is discussed at paragraph 26.

Dependent claim 31 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that the information indicative of the identity of the sender is cryptographically signed, and that the reading step further comprises checking the cryptographic signature. These further characterizations are described in paragraph 23, 25, and 26 of the specification.

Dependent claim 32 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that it contains the additional step, which would be performed in the event that the sender is not on the list of expected senders, of further inspecting the delivered mail piece. This further characterization is discussed in paragraph 26 of the specification.

A summary of a fifth embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 37, follows.

An adhesive postal indicium comprises: information indicative of a postage amount printed by a first process; information indicative of a country printed by the first process; and cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicium. The cryptographically signed information printed by a different process than the first process. This is shown in Fig. 1 and described in detail at paragraph 18.

A summary of a sixth embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 38, follows.

A plurality of adhesive postal indicia are purchased by a purchaser. Each of the postal indicia comprises information indicative of a postage amount printed by a first process, and information indicative of a country printed by the first process. In addition, each of the indicia comprises cryptographically signed information indicative of the identity of the purchaser. The cryptographically signed information is printed by a different process than the first process. This is shown in Fig. 1 and described in detail at paragraph 18.

A summary of a seventh embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 39, follows.

A printing apparatus comprises:

a plurality of adhesive postal indicia (Fig. 3 item 30), each postal indicium comprising information indicative of a postage amount and information indicative of a country, each postal indicium free of any cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the postal indicia; and

a printer (Fig. 3, item 33) adapted to print upon the plurality of adhesive postal indicia (Fig. 3, item 30) cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia.

This is described in detail at paragraphs 19 and 20.

A summary of an eighth embodiment of the invention, typified by claim 40, follows.

A method is practiced with respect to printing apparatus comprising a plurality of adhesive postal indicia (Fig. 3, item 30), each postal indicium comprising information indicative of a postage

amount and information indicative of a country, each postal indicium free of any cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the postal indicia, and a printer adapted to print upon the plurality of adhesive postal indicia. The printing apparatus is described in detail at paragraphs 19 and 20.

The method comprises the steps of:

receiving information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia;

cryptographically signing the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia; and

printing upon the adhesive postal indicia, by means of the printer, information indicative of the cryptographically signed information.

This is described in detail at paragraph 21.

A summary of a ninth embodiment of the invention, typified by claims 41-43, follows.

In this embodiment there is a would-be mail recipient possessing a list of expected senders, described at paragraph 26 and at claim 41 as filed.

The recipient receives a delivered mail piece bearing a postal indicium, the postal indicium bearing second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the sender of the mail piece. Such an indicium is shown at Fig. 1. The recipient reads the second information indicative of the identity of the sender. This is discussed at paragraph 26.

The recipient determines whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information on the list of expected senders. This is discussed at paragraph 26.

Dependent claim 42 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that the information indicative of the identity of the sender is cryptographically signed, and that the reading step further comprises checking the cryptographic signature. These further characterizations are described in paragraph 23, 25, and 26 of the specification.

Dependent claim 43 further characterizes the method of this embodiment of the invention in that it contains the additional step, which would be performed in the event that the sender is not on the list of expected senders, of further inspecting the delivered mail piece. This further characterization is discussed in paragraph 26 of the specification.

(vi) Grounds of Rejection to be reviewed on Appeal

A. Whether the rejection of claim 1 (and claims 2-9) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

B. Whether the rejection of claim 10 (and claims 11-19) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

C. Whether the rejection of claim 20 (and claims 21-29) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

D. Whether the rejection of claim 30 (and claims 31-32) as supposedly anticipated by PCT publication number WO 9520200 (“Ruut”) is justified.

E. Whether the rejection of claim 37 (and claims 38-39) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

F. Whether the rejection of claim 40 as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

G. Whether the rejection of claim 41 (and claims 42-43) as supposedly anticipated by PCT publication number WO 9520200 (“Ruat”) is justified.

(vii) Argument

A. Whether the rejection of claim 1 (and claims 2-9) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

Claim 1, with portions labeled with letters for convenient reference is:

A method for use with mail pieces and with a purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) requiring, as a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium, receipt of first information indicative of the purchaser's identity,
- (b) deriving by electronic computation second information functionally from said first information;
- (c) printing said second information upon the at least one postal indicium;
- (d) receiving an addressed mail piece with the at least one postal indicium into the mail; and
- (e) delivering the addressed mail piece.

“Purchaser” v. “Individual” or “User” or “Customer”. Claim 1, a method claim, centers on

a “purchaser” and a “purchase” of a postal indicium. In contrast, the Kara reference refers to a “customer” of a card generating system and an “individual” or “user” associated with an E-STAMP program.

The first sentence of the Detailed Description of the Invention of Kara (Column 3 line 65 through Column 4 line 2) reads:

The present invention provides for a portable postage storage device [for example, a smart card]... that can be coupled to a processor-based system [loaded with an E-STAMP program] that interacts with a customer to generate an individual greeting card or other piece of mail.

Column 11, line 63 through Column 12, line 2 of Kara reads:

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the E-STAMP program is loaded into a processor-based system controlled by a set of instructions from a document generating program, preferably an application program programmed to interact with a customer to generate a personalized greeting card, or other piece of mail.

The Examiner appears to improperly interchange the terms of “individual” and “user,” which are both related to Kara’s E-STAMP program, with the term of “customer,” which is separately related to Kara’s card generating system. The undersigned has been unable to find a disclosure anywhere in the Kara reference indicating that the “user” or “individual” associated with the E-STAMP program must be the same as Kara’s “customer” who uses the card generating system to create a greeting card and possibly customized postal indicia. The undersigned has also been unable to find anything in the Kara reference which would lead one to believe that the “purchaser” in the present application is an equivalent of Kara’s “user,” “individual,” or “customer.”

Correct usage of the terminology is particularly important with respect to part (a) of claim 1 where receipt of first information indicative of a “purchaser’s” identity is required as a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium. On page 2 of the July 14, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner points to Fig. 3 of Kara, the “Post N Mail License Agreement” for the E-

STAMP program and states that “without registering a user to the system, the user cannot purchase and print the postal indicium.” On pages 3 and 4 of the July 14, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner states:

The purchaser of the postage indicium MUST utilize a smart card (186) , which is the certificate for identification of purchaser, so as to utilize the franking machine. Accordingly, the purchaser’s identity must be required by whoever issues the smart card and this is a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium.

The undersigned is unable to find where Kara states that “without registering a user to the system, the user cannot purchase and print the postal indicium.” It also appears to the undersigned that it is not necessarily the “user” of the E-STAMP program who actually prints and purchases the postal indicium, but is instead the “customer” of the card generating system. Specifically, Column 15, line 33 of Kara discloses the “customer” of a card generating system having the option of printing appropriate postage, not the “individual” or the “user” of the E-STAMP program. The undersigned is also unable to find anywhere in Kara where the “customer” of the card generating system is required to fill out the Post N Mail License Agreement prior to generating and purchasing postal indicia with the card generating system. In fact, looking at the form itself, it appears that Kara’s “customer” would never see the form, let alone get a chance to fill it out. Instead, it appears that the form attempts to bind the end user (possibly the “customer” of the card generating system) when the “user” or “individual” of the E-STAMP program completes the form based on information indicative of the identities of the “user” or “individual”. The form does not appear to request information indicative of the identity of the future potential “customer”. Therefore, in Kara, receipt of information indicative of the customer’s identity is not an absolute precondition to a customer’s purchasing of a postal indicium with a card generating system.

Part (c) of claim 1 is not anticipated by Kara. The undersigned has diligently studied Kara and is unable to find the limitation of “printing said second information upon the at least one postal indicium,” where said second information is functionally derived by electronic computation from said first information, said first information indicative of the identity of a

“purchaser” of a postal indicium. The Examiner states on page 4 of the July 14, 2005 Office Action that this limitation can be found in Figs. 16A-B and column 16, lines 35-60 of Kara. However, this portion of Kara instead appears to be a description of the steps a “customer” using a card generating system might use to print postal indicia. As stated above, the “customer” of Kara is not equivalent to the “purchaser” in the present application, nor is the “customer” of Kara equivalent to the “individual” of Kara. The postal indicia purchased by the “customer” of Kara appears to be purchased from the entity that charges for the use of the card generating system (possibly, the “user” or “individual” associated with the E-STAMP program). Therefore, the identity of the “customer” is not associated with what is printed on the postal indicia. Column 16, lines 35-60 of Kara do disclose the possibility of printing encrypted information about the “user’s” identification number associated with the E-STAMP program, but as discussed above, this “user” is not the same as the “customer” of the card generating program. Therefore encrypted information about the “user’s” identification number is not the same as encrypted information about the identity of the present application’s “purchaser.”

Column 16, lines 41-52 of Kara discloses a list of encrypted information which may be incorporated within a meter stamp. This list includes:

the day, the date, the postage storage device serial number, the E-STAMP serial number, the sender’s zip code, the addressee’s zip code, the expiration date of the postage storage device, the cumulative values of the strike and dollar counters, PNM registration number, the user’s identification number, and the Post Office identification number.

(See Col. 16, lines 42-48 of Kara).

The only item in this list that might be connected with the “customer” of Kara is the “sender’s zip code.” However, a “sender’s zip code” is unlikely to be sufficient to convey information indicative of the identity of “customers” using the card generating systems. A single zip code could include thousands of different people with thousands of different identities. If the card generating system were used by local customers, most of them would have the same zip code and

it would be impossible to distinguish one customer from another based on that information. A zip code of a “sender” would also then be unlikely to provide information indicative of the identity of Kara’s “user” or “individual.”

Even if a zip code could be considered identifying information, Col. 15., lines 13-17 of Kara specifically provide that the “customer” using the card generating system has the option of providing a return address, which would include a zip code. This appears to be the only time that the customer is prompted to enter a return address. If providing the return address is “optional,” then it can not be an absolute “precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium,” and second information derived from it would not necessarily be printed on the postage indicia.

As the Kara reference does not disclose each and every one of the limitations of claim 1, the rejection should be reversed.

B. Whether the rejection of claim 10 (and claims 11-19) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

For convenience, Claim 10, is printed below.

A method for use with purchased postal indicia, with mail pieces and with a purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

requiring, as a precondition of receiving at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium into the mail, that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser;

receiving the at least one addressed mail piece with the postal indicium into the mail; and

delivering the at least one addressed mail piece.

The Applicant notes that the Examiner rejects claim 10 for the exact same reasons as claim 1

even though the two claims contain different limitations. Claim 1 claims a precondition for purchasing a postal indicium and claim 10 claims a precondition for receiving a mail piece into the mail. Purchasing a postal indicium (i.e. buying a stamp) is not the same as actually mailing a letter.

Irregardless, the preconditions of both of the claims require second information derived from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser. Kara does not disclose a requirement that postal indicia on a piece of mail must bear information derived by electronic computation from information indicative of the identity of the purchaser of the postal indicia, prior to that piece of mail being mailed and delivered.

The Examiner states on page 5 of the July 14, 2005 Office Action:

The purchaser of the postage indicium MUST utilize a smart card (186), which is the certificate for identification of purchaser, so as to utilize the franking machine. Accordingly, the purchaser's identity must be required by whoever issues the smart card and this is a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium; see col. 5, lines 26-34; and Fig. 1B, the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser (see col. 16, lines 35-60);

Again, the Examiner incorrectly mixes the terms of "purchaser" "individual" and "user." The arguments and points made above with respect to the differences between the term "purchaser" for this application and the terms "individual" and "user" from Kara apply equally to claim 10 and the rejection of claim 10 should be reversed for the same reasons.

C. Whether the rejection of claim 20 (and claims 21-29) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 ("Kara") is justified.

For convenience, claim 20 is printed below.

A method for use with purchased postal indicia, with mail pieces and with a

purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

requiring, as a precondition of delivering at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium, that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser;

receiving the at least one addressed mail piece with the postal indicium into the mail; and

delivering the at least one addressed mail piece.

Although claim 1 and claim 20 have different limitations, the preconditions of both of the claims require second information derived from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser. Kara does not disclose a requirement that postal indicia on a piece of mail must bear information derived by electronic computation from information indicative of the identity of the purchaser of the postal indicia, prior to that piece of mail being delivered.

As with claim 1 and claim 10, the Examiner again incorrectly mixes the terms of “purchaser” “individual” and “user” in the rejection. The arguments and points made above with respect to the differences between the term “purchaser” for this application and the terms “individual” and “user” from Kara apply equally to claim 20 and the rejection of claim 20 should be reversed for the same reasons.

D. Whether the rejection of claim 30 (and claims 31-32) as supposedly anticipated by an English translation of PCT publication number WO 9520200 (“Ruat”) is justified.

Claim 30 is:

A method for use with mail pieces and with a recipient possessing a list of expected senders, and with a sender having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a delivered mail piece bearing a postal indicium, the postal indicium bearing second information derived by electronic computation from first

information indicative of the identity of the sender;

reading the second information indicative of the identity of the sender; and

determining whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information is on the list of expected senders.

The Examiner states on page 10 of the July 14, 2005 Office Action:

Ruat discloses a method for used with mail piece, comprising: receiving an addressed mail piece with the at least one postal indicium into the mail, the postal indicium bearing information indicative of the identity of the sender (see page 10);

reading the information indicative of the identity of the sender; and

determining whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the information is on the list of expected senders (e.g. see the last paragraph of page 10 for the purpose of sorting and recording the mail).

The undersigned has reviewed the last two paragraphs of page 10 of Ruat and the first paragraph of page 11 of Ruat and is of the view that those paragraphs do not disclose Claim 30's limitation of :

a recipient possessing a list of expected senders... [and] determining whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information is on the list of expected senders.

The cited portion of Ruat instead appears to disclose:

a company which everyday receives several tens or hundreds of mailing envelopes... can also proceed automatically with a first sorting of the mail received, when the name of the person who is the recipient of an envelope appears in the coded non-encrypted information in addition to the name of the company.

(Last paragraph of page 10 through first paragraph of page 11 of Ruat.)

Sorting mail by the name of the recipient on an envelope is different than having a list of expected senders and checking to see if the sender of an envelope is on that list.

In our September 13, 2005 Response to the July 14, 2005 Office Action, we invited the Examiner

to point out where exactly in Ruat a mail recipient possesses a list of expected senders and exactly where in Ruat that mail recipient is able to determine, based on information contained in the postal indicia of a particular piece of mail (which bears second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the sender), that the sender of that particular piece of mail is on its list of expected senders. However, the present record is devoid of a response to that request from the Examiner.

The rejection of claim 30 should be reversed.

E. Whether the rejection of claim 37 (and claims 38-39) as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

The Examiner appears to have rejected Claim 1 and Claims 37-39 for essentially the same reasons. Although the claims are different, the arguments provided above for Claim 1 with respect to Claim 1's limitations of

requiring, as a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium, receipt of first information indicative of the purchaser's identity,

and

printing said second information upon the at least one postal indicium;

also apply to Claim 37-39 limitations of either a postal indicium or indicia comprising:

cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicium];

the cryptographically signed information printed by a different process than the first process

or a printer adapted to print the same upon adhesive postal indicia.

As with claim 1, the Examiner again incorrectly mixes the terms of “purchaser” “individual” and

“user” in this rejection. Correct usage of these terms is especially critical to determining what information is cryptographically signed. The arguments and points made above with respect to the differences between the term “purchaser” for this application and the terms “individual” and “user” from Kara apply equally to claims 37-39 and the rejection of claims 37-39 should be reversed for the same reasons.

In our September 13, 2005 Response to the July 14, 2005 Office Action, we invited the Examiner to point out exactly where the Kara reference makes clear that the “user,” the “individual,” and the “customer” of Kara; as well as the “purchaser” of the current application are interchangeable terms with respect to purchasing postal indicia. However, the present record is devoid of a response to that request from the Examiner.

F. Whether the rejection of claim 40 as supposedly anticipated by US Patent No. 5,717,597 (“Kara”) is justified.

The Examiner appears to have rejected claim 40 for essentially the same reasons as claim 1 and claims 37-39. Although the claims are different, the arguments provided above for claim 1 and claims 37-39 are repeated.

The rejection of claim 40 should be reversed.

G. Whether the rejection of claim 41 (and claims 42-43) as supposedly anticipated by an English translation of PCT publication number WO 9520200 (“Ruat”) is justified.

The Examiner appears to have rejected Claim 30 and Claims 41-43 for essentially the same reasons. With respect to Claims 41-43, the arguments provided for Claim 30 are repeated.

Additionally, with respect to Claim 42, Ruat does not disclose Claim 42's limitation of:

the information indicative of the identity of the sender that is borne in the postal indicium is cryptographically signed, and further characterized in that the reading step further comprises checking the cryptographic signature.

In fact Ruat specifically teaches away from this limitation because the recipient in Ruat does not have the ability to read encrypted information. The recipient in Ruat appears to have the ability to read coded non-encrypted information, but not encrypted information. According to the 7th paragraph of page 4 of Ruat, "encrypted information items can only be decrypted by the postal service."

In our September 13, 2005 Response to the July 14, 2005 Office Action, we invited the Examiner to point out exactly where in Ruat

the information indicative of the identity of the sender that is borne in the postal indicium is cryptographically signed, and further characterized in that the reading step [performed by the recipient] further comprises checking the cryptographic signature,

is located. However, the present record is devoid of a response to that request from the Examiner.

The rejections of claims 41-43 should be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

March 12, 2006

Date

/s/

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Claims Appendix

1. A method for use with mail pieces and with a purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

requiring, as a precondition of purchasing at least one postal indicium, receipt of first information indicative of the purchaser's identity,

deriving by electronic computation second information functionally from said first information;

printing said second information upon the at least one postal indicium;

receiving an addressed mail piece with the at least one postal indicium into the mail; and

delivering the addressed mail piece.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the postal indicium is an adhesive postage stamp.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the postal indicium is a meter strip.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the postal indicium is printed on an envelope.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the postal indicium is printed on a post card.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the second information is an invisibly printed bar code.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the second information is a visibly printed bar code.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the second information is a human-readable message.
9. The method of claim 1 further characterized in that the number of postal indicia comprise a plurality, and wherein the printing, receiving, and delivering steps are carried out with respect to each of the plurality of indicia.
10. A method for use with purchased postal indicia, with mail pieces and with a purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

requiring, as a precondition of receiving at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium into the mail, that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser;

receiving the at least one addressed mail piece with the postal indicium into the mail; and

delivering the at least one addressed mail piece.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the postal indicium is an adhesive postage stamp.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein the postal indicium is a meter strip.
13. The method of claim 10 wherein the postal indicium is printed on an envelope.
14. The method of claim 10 wherein the postal indicium is printed on a post card.
15. The method of claim 10 wherein the second information is an invisibly printed bar code.
16. The method of claim 10 wherein the second information is a visibly printed bar code.
17. The method of claim 10 wherein the second information is a human-readable message.
18. The method of claim 10 further characterized in that the number of addressed mail pieces comprise a plurality, and wherein the printing, receiving, and delivering steps are carried out with respect to each of the plurality of addressed mail pieces.
19. The method of claim 10 further characterized in that the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser is cryptographically signed, the precondition further characterized as requiring successful checking of the cryptographic signature.

20. A method for use with purchased postal indicia, with mail pieces and with a purchaser having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

requiring, as a precondition of delivering at least one addressed mail piece with a postal indicium, that the postal indicium bear second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the purchaser;

receiving the at least one addressed mail piece with the postal indicium into the mail; and

delivering the at least one addressed mail piece.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the postal indicium is an adhesive postage stamp.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein the postal indicium is a meter strip.

23. The method of claim 20 wherein the postal indicium is printed on an envelope.

24. The method of claim 20 wherein the postal indicium is printed on a post card.

25. The method of claim 20 wherein the second information is an invisibly printed bar code.

26. The method of claim 20 wherein the second information is a visibly printed bar code.

27. The method of claim 20 wherein the second information is a human-readable message.

28. The method of claim 20 further characterized in that the number of addressed mail pieces comprise a plurality, and wherein the printing, receiving, and delivering steps are carried out with respect to each of the plurality of addressed mail pieces.

29. The method of claim 20 further characterized in that the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser is cryptographically signed, the precondition further characterized as requiring successful checking of the cryptographic signature.

30. A method for use with mail pieces and with a recipient possessing a list of expected senders, and with a sender having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a delivered mail piece bearing a postal indicium, the postal indicium bearing second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the sender;

reading the second information indicative of the identity of the sender; and

determining whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information is on the

list of expected senders.

31. The method of claim 30 further characterized in that the information indicative of the identity of the sender that is borne in the postal indicium is cryptographically signed, and further characterized in that the reading step further comprises checking the cryptographic signature.

32. The method of claim 30 comprising the additional step, performed in the event of the sender not being on the list of expected senders, of inspecting the delivered mail piece.

33-36. (Canceled)

37. An adhesive postal indicium comprising:

information indicative of a postage amount printed by a first process;

information indicative of a country printed by the first process; and

cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicium;

the cryptographically signed information printed by a different process than the first process.

38. A plurality of adhesive postal indicia, each postal indicium comprising:

information indicative of a postage amount printed by a first process;

information indicative of a country printed by the first process; and

cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia;

the cryptographically signed information printed by a different process than the first process.

39. Printing apparatus comprising:

a plurality of adhesive postal indicia, each postal indicium comprising information indicative of a postage amount and information indicative of a country, each postal indicium free of any cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the postal indicia; and

a printer adapted to print upon the plurality of adhesive postal indicia cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia.

40. A method for use with printing apparatus comprising a plurality of adhesive postal indicia,

each postal indicium comprising information indicative of a postage amount and information indicative of a country, each postal indicium free of any cryptographically signed information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the postal indicia, and a printer adapted to print upon the plurality of adhesive postal indicia, the steps of:

receiving information indicative of an identity of a purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia;

cryptographically signing the information indicative of the identity of the purchaser of the adhesive postal indicia; and

printing upon the adhesive postal indicia, by means of the printer, information indicative of the cryptographically signed information.

41. A method for use with mail pieces and with a recipient possessing a list of expected senders, and with a sender having an identity, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a delivered mail piece bearing a postal indicium, the postal indicium bearing second information derived by electronic computation from first information indicative of the identity of the sender;

reading, by the recipient, the second information indicative of the identity of the sender; and

determining, by the recipient, whether the sender whose identity is indicated by the second information is on the list of expected senders.

42. The method of claim 41 further characterized in that the information indicative of the identity of the sender that is borne in the postal indicium is cryptographically signed, and further characterized in that the reading step further comprises checking the cryptographic signature.

43. The method of claim 41 comprising the additional step, performed in the event of the sender not being on the list of expected senders, and performed by the recipient, of inspecting the delivered mail piece.

Evidence Appendix

The following references cited by the Examiner in the July 14, 2005 Office Action are included within this Appendix.

1. A copy of US Patent No. 5,717,597
2. A copy of an English translation of PCT publication number WO 9520200

Related Proceedings Appendix

This Appendix is empty as there have not been any decisions rendered by a court or the Board for any related proceedings.